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An Essay  
upon  
Alcoholic Stimulants.

their uses and abuses

Respectfully Submitted to the Faculty  
of the  
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For the Degree of Doctor of Medicine  
by

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In the following Essay I propose  
to show the effects of Alcohol upon the  
human organization when taken as  
a medicine, which may be considered its  
use, and also when taken in health as  
a beverage, which may be called its abuse.  
Medicinally it may be advantageously  
used in many ways. In gastrodynia,  
cramp colic, or flatulency, it may prove  
useful, provided no better homeopathic  
remedy be at hand. In cases of  
dyspepsia when the disease appears  
to be as it were congenital, & not  
the result of abuse of the digestive  
organ, the use of some of the milder  
forms of alcoholic Stimuli may be  
resorted to and even continued for a  
very long time, perhaps through life.

better means can be found than  
an alcoholic Stimulant, although  
this must be administered with  
the greatest care lest by giving  
too much; its stimulating Effect  
be exceeded and the sedative  
Effect produced, which would leave  
the patient then, in a worse condition  
than if he had been left to Nature.

Again the greatest care must be  
exercised to ascertain as far as  
practicable the precise nature of  
the injury which has occasioned  
the fainting as the administration  
of a Stimulus in many such cases  
might prove fatal. For example,  
a small blood vessel in the head  
has been ruptured, by a fall, blow,

or other violence, the patient lies pale,  
and shrunken, if left alone, Nature  
will gradually in a short time  
heal up the small vessel without  
much, if any escape of blood. Whereas  
if a stimulant be injudiciously  
administered, the circulation is  
increased, the ruptured vein is not  
allowed to heal, blood is poured  
out upon the brain, and the  
patient dies from the effects of  
the remedy rather than of the injury.

The weaker kinds of alcoholic  
beverages as malt liquors & wine  
are very useful in cases of profuse  
discharge, such as accompanying  
carbuncle, or any large suppurating  
sore, in patients of a cachectic disposi-

tion, when the discharge is accompanied with hectic fever.

Stimulants may also be of Essential benefit in the advanced stages of inflammation Especially of the internal organs. Also in the nervous depression attendant upon many fevers as typhus and typhoid, the continued use of small quantities of wine or brandy will be found to have a most happy Effect.

The administration of alcohol in Medicine is generally in small and repeated doses, so as to keep up the stimulating, without reaching the sedative Effect.

The only exceptions to this rule

are; in the bites of Serpents as  
mentioned above, or occasionally  
in cases of great loss of blood  
as in flooding.

If I have not in the foregoing  
given all the medicinal uses  
of alcohol, I have certainly  
said enough to show that it holds  
an important place as a remedial  
agent, one although much more  
in vogue among the practitioners  
of the old school, than among  
ourselves, I believe no homoeopath  
could do suitably without.

It is a curious fact connected  
with the use of alcohol, that  
habitual drunkards are very  
seldom indeed affected with

tubercular phthisis. In the  
bodies of nearly twenty drunkards  
examined in New York in 1842-'43  
"Not one tubercular abscess was  
met with even of the smallest  
size while a small number of  
chalky or obsolete tubercles was  
frequently noticed".

I will now proceed to the second  
part of my essay its use as a  
beverage or in other words, its  
abuse.

As an article of food, or an  
adjunct to a meal, it surely  
gives a spur to the system which  
is attended by a corresponding  
reaction, and as it has the  
power according to Orfila of

Coagulating the albuminous portions  
of the contents of the stomach,  
it must greatly interfere with, if  
not altogether put a stop to the  
process of digestion, so long as it  
remains unabsorbed in the stomach.

As to its power of sustaining  
under bodily or mental labor  
Experience has shown in all climates  
that a greater amount of Ether  
can be sustained when totally  
abstaining from it. Labor Ether  
Bodily or Mental involves a wasting  
or disintegration of tissues which  
can only be supplied by food  
and rest, it is true that the use  
of a stimulus gives a temporary  
impetus, but this is followed

by a depression, leaving a still  
larger waste to be made up.

The alcohol gives no substance  
to either of the decaying tissues  
but only stimulates the nervous  
to force on the muscular to  
do more work than it ought.

With regard to mental labor  
the same remarks apply the  
brain being stimulated to an  
amount of overwork without the  
power of making up for the  
additional waste.

As a help, in the support of  
extremes of temperature it has  
many advocates, but here its  
efficacy can be proved to be  
null void. Thelung Casagary

of Liver complaints and others  
occurring amongst Europeans, more  
especially Englishmen, residing  
in India and other tropical climates  
May be mainly attributed to their  
almost perpetual use of alcoholic  
and other stimulants, whilst the  
natives of those countries and those  
Europeans residing there too poor  
to afford such so called luxuries  
are entirely exempt from them.

The experience of all the  
Arctic navigators and those  
engaged in the whale fishery  
in extreme Northern latitudes  
shows that a greater amount  
of continued cold can be  
endured by those who never

Touch these beverages, although  
much benefit might be derived  
from the use of spirits by a person  
exposed to an intense degree of  
cold for a short time, the reason  
of this is obvious, the alcohol  
produces heat by its ready  
oxidation in the lungs, but  
as this would interfere with  
the removal of the effete or  
waste matter from the system,  
it could not be continued for  
any length of time, without  
interfering greatly with the  
functioning of the whole system.  
I have thus in a very brief  
way indicated to show that  
Alcohol is inefficacious for

the three purposes for which it  
is mostly taken. Namely.

1<sup>st</sup>. As an article of food  
2<sup>nd</sup>. As a supporter of Labor  
3<sup>rd</sup>. As a supporter of the  
Vicissitudes of Climate.

Now let us lastly glance at a  
few of its bad effects. and their  
name alas is Legion.

Common intoxication is too frequent  
to need description from me here it  
takes a thousand forms according  
to the Temperament, Some are  
Gloved, Some Moody, Some quarrelsome,  
but all dejected and miserable when  
the stimulus has died away, and  
reaction set in.

The ingestion of a very large quantity

of Alcohol into the system causes almost immediate death.

The continued use of even small quantities of Stimulants of this kind, predisposes to the attacks of all zymotic complaints, and drinkers are infinitely more liable to chronic diseases in after life than the temperate, such as fatty degeneration of the heart's Muscular Substance, of the walls of the arteries, and of the glandular Substance of the Kidneys & Liver. Bright's disease of the Kidney, and Nutmeg liver, are generally met with amongst this unhappy class. Alcohol being so very readily oxidized

in the lungs, must interfere very  
materially with the removal of  
the Effete matter from the system.

Another state into which the  
unhappy drinker not infrequently  
falls is that known as "Alcohol-  
ismus Chronicus". Here the  
Alcohol though perhaps never  
taken in intoxicating doses, has  
as it were, cumulated in the system.  
The limbs, hands, body & tongue  
of the poor wretch tremble, Throbbing  
sensations affect the skin, the  
mind is weak, the spirits gone,  
strength, appetite, sleep are  
all impaired or gone, the only  
relief is the temporary one  
afforded by drinking more, and

But this at last fails. He lives  
for a while upon the stimulus  
until Epilepsy or some kindred  
disease puts an end to his  
wretched existence.

Thus much for the body now  
how does it act upon the mind?  
Its invariable effect even in  
small doses is to blunt the  
moral sensibilities, and to  
rouse all the animal passions  
hardly a crime is committed  
in which this agent has not  
some hand. Mahommed  
says in the Koran that "wine  
is a mother of sins."

Although many great men  
of this, and other countries

have been drinkers, many of them  
very hard drinkers, this goes to  
prove nothing in its favor, they  
might, and in all probability  
would have been better men  
without it. The men who  
habitually use much stimulus  
are remarkable for activity of mind  
or brilliancy of intellect.

But its most marked effects  
are in the following diseases of  
the mind, Delirium tremens  
which generally occurs after a  
debauch or after a sudden  
accident, or great loss of blood  
Even in a comparatively moderate  
drinker. This is a morbid  
disease very much in different

persons, in all however the appetite  
is entirely gone, the mind is under  
delusions of a thousand different  
characters preying upon the mind  
of the unfortunate individual  
afflicted. One peculiar feature  
in this kind of madness is  
that the patient amongst other  
things almost always imagines  
himself surrounded by armies  
of every description. Hies, rats,  
snakes, lizards, & the like.  
Another form perhaps the  
most terrible is Mania a pota  
or Delirium Chronicum, this  
comes on after the man has  
become sober. That is to say  
no longer under the influence of

liquor it is of a most terrible  
and dangerous kind, the poor  
victim having to be restrained  
to prevent violence and hurt to  
himself & others, it often changes  
its character into that of a confirmed  
and hopeless mental disease.  
Another and the last effect  
of Alcohol at which I shall  
have space to glance within the  
limits of this thesis is that  
known by the name of Delirium  
this though not always occurring  
in drunkards, can never occur  
in a person who has never used  
alcoholic stimulants.

It consists of a most irresistible  
Craving for ardent spirits, the

victim. Malloving them as fast  
as he can and often keeping  
drunk for days & weeks together.

During the intervals between these  
paroxysms, he is sober and trust  
worthy, but the poison once tasted  
he cannot refrain. One who  
was thus afflicted said.

"If a bottle of brandy stood  
at one end of the table and the  
pit of hell yawned at the other  
and I were convinced I should  
be pushed in as soon as I took  
one glass, I could not refrain."

I knew a gentleman at the  
Cape of Good Hope whose wife  
was afflicted with this Malady  
She would steal from his side

at night, and go down into his  
shop (a drug store) and there  
drink alcohol, Eau de Cologne,  
or anything intoxicating she  
could find until she became  
entirely insensible. In her case  
the disease was brought about by  
her having been prescribed a glass  
of sherry wine daily, as a tonic.

In concluding this Essay I  
feel that it is impossible within  
so narrow a space to give more  
than a glance at this interesting  
subject, and that I have  
left very much unsaid both  
as to the uses and abuses of  
stimulating drinks, more  
especially the latter, for I

Truly believe there is hardly  
a disease acute or chronic  
which is not aggravated by  
its symptoms by the patient  
having habituated himself  
to the use of these deterring  
liquors, and hardly a crime  
or misery upon the face of  
the Earth more especially  
amongst our own Anglo-Saxon  
race that cannot be directly  
or indirectly traced to this  
down. It is true that these  
results spring from our indul-  
gence, but moderate drinking  
will inevitably lead to excess  
there is no dividing line between  
them. No one begins to drink

with the intention of becoming  
a drunkard.

In view of the foregoing facts  
that except in a medicinal  
point of view, no good can  
be derived in any way from  
the use of Stimulants, but on  
the other hand a long  
train of Evils, bodily & mental  
follow its use, does it not  
behoove every Father to warn  
his children, Every physician  
to warn his patients of the  
fearful risk they run by  
trifling with such a danger.

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